

10694



A  
L E T T E R

To the RIGHT REVEREND the  
Lord BISHOP of *London*.

0



[ Price One Shilling. ]





A  
LETTER

To the Right Reverend the  
L O R D B I S H O P  
O F  
L O N D O N:

*Gibson / E*

Occasioned by

*K*  
D I S P U T I N G

W I T H A

Q U A K E R.

The SECOND EDITION.



L O N D O N:

Printed for T. COOPER, at the *Globe*, in  
*Pater-noster-Row.*

M D C C X L I.





My LORD,

I AM sensible of the Presumption of this Address; and nothing could have encouraged me to undertake it, but the Importance I apprehend the Subject of this Letter to be of to the Welfare of our National Church, in the Guardianship of which your Lordship so worthily bears a considerable Share, and for the excellent Principles whereof you have always so seasonably and successfully expressed the greatest Zeal. Two lasting Instances of which are, the good Effects of your Lordship's truly PASTORAL LETTERS in general, and the many learned and ingenious Detections of the Errors of the *Romish* Church, wrote in consequence of your Apprehension of Danger to these Nations from the Affiduity of her numerous and pestilent Emissaries. Such Examples of your Lordship's Influence, are sufficient Motives to determine those who conceive our Church in Danger, from any other Quarter, to whom they ought to apply, and from whom there is the greatest Probability of Redress. — These Considerations have induced me to take the Liberty of presenting to your Lordship's Perusal the Substance of a private Conversation; being conscious that, though, merely as such, it cannot hope for your Lordship's Notice,

B

yet



yet when it appears to have been on a Subject of the greatest Weight to the artless Disputants, and of the same Nature with what at present are frequent in most Companies where Religion happens to be the Topick of Discourse ; I trust, from your Lordship's known Candor and Impartiality, that it will not be thought unworthy your Regard, though presented in a Dress much inferior to what I wish myself capable of offering your Lordship : Nor have I any Hope of Excuse for this Freedom, but what flows from a Persuasion that the Sincerity of my Design will atone for the many Imperfections which may attend its Execution.

THE Progress of the Opinions of the QUAKERS within these few Years, and that favourable Judgment of their Tenets, which at present seems so generally to prevail among the Members of our Established Church, and shewed itself so openly on occasion of the late *Tythe Bill*, is yet far from being subsided ; and calls for the Attention of all who have any Regard to the excellent Doctrines of the *Church of England*, and the Ecclesiastical Constitution of this Kingdom : For the Industry of these People seems not at all equalled by the Defenders of our Church, our best Writers being wholly silent on that Head ; unless we except a few Tracts lately published on the single Article of TYTHES ; which, I am afraid, betray as strong a Regard in the Authors to their *own Temporal Interests*, as for the *Cause of Christianity*.

I MUST beg leave to inform your Lordship, that, for some Years, I have lived near a *Quaker*, with whom I have had a good Correspondence ; and we have mutually endeavoured to oblige each other, our Genius's being nearly of the same Cast,  
and

and our Leisure Hours much alike. In conversing with him I took the greater Pleasure, as he is a Man of too much Sense to observe those trifling Singularities in Speech and Deportment, which seem now chiefly to distinguish the *weaker* Members of that Community. He appeared always well confirmed in his own Opinions, but a Contemner of none. For eight Years, I do not remember we talked as many Minutes on Religion; being both unwilling to start a Subject, from which we had little Hopes of reaping that reciprocal Satisfaction which any other Topick seldom failed to afford us: Nor had it ever, I believe, become the Theme of our Discourse, had not a very near Relation of mine lately declared himself of their Profession. I was not able to conceal my Concern on this Occasion, nor to avoid expressing myself somewhat warmly to my Kinsman on account of his Change; which happening sometimes when my *Friend* was in Company, he always endeavoured to palliate Matters with all the Tenderness to us both that could possibly be expressed. In one of these Lectures, my *Apostate Kinsman*, as I called him, proposed, if we both approved, to set an Evening apart for a Conversation wholly on Religion, or on the Principles and Practices in which the Communities we were Members of most differed from each other: And at the same time he assured me, that, whatever I might imagine, he was yet so unbiassed as to be influenced in his future Profession entirely by the Event of the Dispute; which, he said, he thought he might very safely promise, as he believed us both Men of equally good Intentions, and of sufficient Knowledge in the designed Subject to give the best Reasons of our respective Parties for the Essentials in which they differed; and more than that, he added,

could be of little Signification in respect to Duty, however material some might think it in point of Speculation.

THERE was something so candid in this Offer, that I could not, without the Appearance of Weakness or Prejudice, reject it; and it was also accepted by my *Friend*. I said, indeed, that such a Conference might be rather a Contest between the Talents and Reading of the Disputants, than a fair Representation of the Pleas of the Parties they undertook to defend; but my Opponent answered, in order to remove that Objection, it would be best for us both, previous to our appointed Meeting, to take a Survey of the several Arguments on either Side, from the most generally approved Authors on those Heads that would probably fall under our Consideration; which he thought might not only add much to our Observations, but be a Means of avoiding the many unnatural Digressions which generally frustrate the Design of Conversations on religious Subjects. With this View we deferred our Meeting for two Months; and agreed to bring with us Notes, or Memorandums, of whatever we judged necessary.

DURING this time I furnished myself with every thing of any Credit relating to the *Quakers* that I was not already possessed of, and very carefully reviewed some Treatises which I had formerly hastily read over: I perused all the Pieces against the *Quakers*, written by Mr. Bug, Mr. Keith, Mr. Lefley, &c. and read, with very great Attention, the learned Dr. Bennet's *Confutation of Quakerism*, Mr. Patrick Smith's *Preservative* against it, and the several Tracts occasioned by the Right Reverend the present Bishop of *Durham's Defence of Christianity*,  
and



and the late Bishop *Burnet's* Second Volume of the *History of his own Times*: And as I proceeded, I carefully minuted down whatever I thought pertinent and conclusive on any Point of Difference between our Church and the Opinions of the *Quakers*, the better to be prepared for what might occur in the Pursuit of our Design.

THE appointed Evening being come, we met according to Agreement; and, that we might avoid the many Repetitions which commonly attend extempore Arguments of this Nature, I proposed, That, as we were furnished, in Writing, with the principal Authorities for what we were preparing to defend, it would not be amiss to allow each the Liberty of taking, in Writing also, as much of his Opponent's Objections and Answers as he thought fit. This my *Friend* agreed to, provided a Liberty was likewise granted of making what Use we pleased of such Observations; to which I consented; and by virtue of that Condition I offer the Substance of our Dispute to your Lordship; humbly hoping you will excuse the want of Eloquence in a Discourse on Religion, a Subject which, however it may attract our *Eyes*, and feast our Fancies in an elegant Dress, has always been observed to subdue most *Hearts* in its natural Plainness and Simplicity.

THE Attributes of the ALMIGHTY being mutually assented to, it next followed to consider, *What Rule he has given to inform us of his Will, and to render our Conduct agreeable to the End for which we were created?*

THIS Rule I asserted to be the SCRIPTURES; which were written under divine Influence for that  
End,

End, and have been miraculously preserved through Torrents of Destruction to this Time for the same Purpose; being esteemed such by the Believers in the first Ages of Christianity; who, had there been a *superior Guide*, must undoubtedly have known it; it being impossible to suppose those mistaken in the fundamental Principle of their Faith, who lived so near the Time of our SAVIOUR'S Appearance upon Earth, and must have had the best Opportunities of searching into the Nature and Privileges of the Gospel-Dispensation.

My Friend asserted the Christians Primary Rule of Faith and Practice to be the HOLY SPIRIT; from whence, *said he*, the Scriptures are *derived*, like the Stream from the Fountain, as the Scriptures themselves all along declare; and the Manner in which they were always delivered, sufficiently evinces they were never designed for more than a Secondary Help, and that only by the *Assistance* of the same *Spirit* which *produced* them, which must ever be the Seal of their Authority. For Example: How shall I know the *Scriptures* to contain my Duty to GOD, and to my *Neighbour*? Perhaps you will answer, that they are sufficiently proved to contain these, and all other Duties, by having been the sole Guide of the first Believers, who, by following *the Precepts* therein contained, obtained peculiar Marks of Favour from Heaven; and therefore recommended them in that Light to their Successors; in consequence of which all the Councils of the Church receiv'd them as a *complete Rule* of Christian Faith, and put their Seals to their Authority, transmitting them as a *sufficient Guide* to all following Ages. But this Plea is of no Weight when you consider, that whatever you own to be the *Cause* of your believing

lieving the divine Authority of the *Scriptures*, you acknowledge to be a *Primary Rule* to the *Scriptures* themselves, and worthy *Superior* Regard; since you can then regard *them* only as recommended by *it*; whether it be a Decree of a Council of Bishops, &c. or the Traditions of your Forefathers.

*In answer to this*, I CITED many Texts of Scripture that recommended the Scriptures as the best Rule of our Actions, and only Oracle of our Faith; particularly where the Prophet refers the *Jews* to *the Law*, and to *the Testimony*; where CHRIST commands us to *Search the Scriptures*, and commends the *Bereans* for so doing; and to prove them a *complete Rule*, I quoted the Words of St. *John*, where he says, *If any Man shall add unto these Things, God shall add unto him the Plagues that are written in this Book*: And endeavoured to shew the Excellence and universal Use of a *Written Guide*, from its making every Man that knows us, equally with ourselves, Judges of our Faith and Conduct; while an *Internal Guide*, being only to be understood by a Man's self, leaves him at Liberty, under Pretence of obeying a Leader whose Voice cannot be heard by another, to plead an inward Authority for his Practices, when, perhaps, they are scarcely consistent with unenlightened Reason; whereas the *same written Words* must always bear the *same Sense*, while Fancy or Enthusiasm may persuade Men to believe that to be the divine Will, which is no more than a wild Imagination, or a Chimera of a distempered Brain.

*To which my Opponent replied*: IT is a very difficult Task to demonstrate, from what you have urged, or any thing that can be added, That the  
ALMIGHTY



ALMIGHTY designed the Scriptures for the *sole*, or even the *principal* R U L E to his Church. For, what were *the Scriptures* in the time of the Patriarchs? What in the time of *David*? *David*, indeed, tells us of meditating in the *Law of God*; but, in his Days not many Books of our Present *Scriptures* were wrote, and, probably, fewer collected together: Whence it is more probable that this *Law of God* was the *Divine Will*, which was in an extraordinary manner made known to him on several Occasions, than any *written Rule* existing at that time. And what are the *Complete Scriptures* at this Day, is not easily determined; some Churches esteeming that a Part of the *Infallible Law*, which others reckon no more than *amusing Stories*. Besides, who had the Care of collecting these Writings, and WHEN was it done? The *Ecclesiastical Historians* tell us of much Dispute and Contention in the General Councils on this Head, and that one Assembly frequently disannulled what another had enjoined. When CHRIST was upon Earth, he mentioned, as you have observed, THE SCRIPTURES; but what then bore that Name, we can no farther tell, than that it is probable he alluded to *The Prophets*, whose Writings are still preserved, and some others which are now lost: For, certain it is, that the best, and, to us, by much the most useful Part of what we now call *The Scriptures*, i. e. the NEW TESTAMENT, was not then penned; very little of the Subject-Matter thereof having then occurred: So that *The Scriptures* cannot always have been a *complete, sufficient* Rule: For, had they been such, when CHRIST mentions *the Scriptures*, what need was there of all the *Gospels* and *Epistles* which followed, since no Rule can be more than *complete* and *sufficient*? Or, does it appear, from the Nature of several  
Books

Books of the *New Testament*, that they were designed, even at the Time of their Writing, to be Part of an *Entire* and *Complete* Rule to Christians in all succeeding Ages? Were not some of them wrote on *accidental* Occasions, on *particular* Subjects, sometimes to particular *Persons*, and sent by a *chance* Messenger? Does not the Private and Minute Matters mentioned in the *Epistles* fully prove this beyond Contradiction?

WHAT you infer from the Certainty of a written Guide, because the *same* Words bear always the *same* Meaning, will be found wide of Experience, when we consider the *innumerable* Meanings which have been drawn from the *same* Sentence by such as have been allowed most capable of Interpreting the *Sacred* Scripture: And, are there not many Places, which, to a Man unskilled in Languages, and unable to infer, compare, and discern very closely, contain Sentiments of apparent Contradiction to one another? As, among many other Instances: Are there not several Passages, besides the Second Commandment, which positively affirm that the Child *shall* suffer for the Iniquity of its Parent; and others that declare the Son *shall not* suffer for the Father, nor the Father for the Son? Do not some Texts attribute Salvation to the unalterable *Will of God* in saving the Elect, and others merely to the *Merit* of Good Works? Does not one Place imply no more than an *Annihilation* at Death, whilst another assures us of an *After-Existence*? In these, and the like Cases, what must the illiterate Peasant do? Must he determine for himself, according to his own Conceptions, though he differs from every body else, and be justifiable in so doing? Or, as I apprehend you will rather approve, must he consult the Learned Divines and Commentators, and

C

abide

abide by their Decision? Not to insist on the Impossibility of this being the right Step for his Information, let us for the present consider it as such, and view the certain Consequences: If the learned Man he applies to, is his Rule in what Sense to understand the *Scriptures*, do not the *Scriptures* thereby cease to be any other Guide to this Man, than what his Interpreter chuses to make them? And, with Regard to this Enquirer, is not the *Scripture* as ductile in the Hand of the Explainer, as Clay in the Hand of a Potter, and liable to bear what Form he best approves?

BESIDES this, the Warmth with which Men of different Sentiments generally enjoin their own Sense of these Disputable Texts on their Auditors, is often of bad Effect to People well affected to the *Scriptures*: A Man's Fondness of his *own Sentiment* being frequently so prevalent among Divine Instructors, of every Denomination, as to make them chuse to bend their best Abilities to the eradicating some inoffensive Opinion in their Hearers, to make room for another equally insignificant, of their own, while the Practice of Christian and Moral Duties, to Heaven, our Neighbour, and Ourselves, are Topicks seldom mentioned; and when they do happen to be the Subject of a Discourse, the *Coolness* and *Indifference* with which they are declared, fall far short of the *Rigor*, *Concern*, and *Agitation* with which an Opinion decried by another Society, is recommended and enforced, sometimes on Penalties little short of Damnation! Thus, from the Pulpit, we have been told that in opposing a *Church of England Clergyman*, we immediately oppose the ALMIGHTY, and that every Churchman must believe King *Charles I.* in the most elevated Heavens;



vens; whilst others, of the same Community, assure us, if we conform to the Church so far as to support her Ministers, we may use our Discretion as to paying them any farther Regard, and affirm that the abovementioned unfortunate Prince was no better than he should be. Thus are People inflamed with Heat and Prejudice about Trifles, from a Belief of the Necessity they are under of obeying their supposed Instructors: And, as Texts of Scripture are brought in Defence of all this, many unthinking Men are induced to leave Real Religion unheeded, and sit down with the greatest Satisfaction at having obtained the Name of a *Stout Churchman*, or *Honest Whig*: And on their Leader's sounding the Alarm of Danger being apprehended to the *Party*, are too ready so far to fall beneath the Temper of a Christian, as to use their Brethren with that Cruelty which is scarce known among the Nations we call *Barbarous*; imagining that they do Service to the Christian Cause, by asserting their Opinion at all Events; though, very often, there is not in the whole *Scriptures* the least Foundation for the Tenet for which they are so zealous.

SUCH are the unavoidable and flagrant Effects of trusting to OTHER *Men* the Explanation of our *Duty*; which yet must be the Case where-ever the *Scriptures* are considered as the sole Guide of Christians; many being unable to come at the Sense, or even to know a Word of them without the Assistance of another. These, and the like Considerations, make it evident to me, that the ALMIGHTY could never design for our *Guide to Happiness*, a Rule subject to such *various Constructions*; and which, should we suppose it to have been full and clear at first, was liable, on

the very next Transcript, (for I never heard the Transcribers were inspired) to be, by Design or Accident, interpolated or abridged, to the Addition or Loss of a Precept of the utmost Moment: Beside this, was it not all along in Danger of being snatched from us by Fire and Desolation; and is not much of the Sense and Meaning of it inevitably lost by every Translation; which yet it must undergo to be intelligible to the greatest Part of Mankind? In a Rule designed for *all* Men to walk by, it is hard to imagine a Possibility of two Meanings, one unnecessary Word, or any of these Difficulties in a Man's coming at the Knowledge of what so nearly concerns him! So generous and beneficent a Being, as we must believe the DEITY to be, I cannot persuade myself to think would give us a Primary Rule of Conduct to ALL Mankind, which many who have it cannot understand, and which Great Part of the World never hear of. The *Holy Spirit* is the only Guide therefore, which, as Obedience to it is required of ALL, ALL are possessed of, in a Degree sufficient to answer the Will of their CREATOR, in every thing conducive to their Peace Here, and Happiness Hereafter.

I AM sorry you mentioned the Sentence of the Apostle where he says, If any Man shall add unto these Things, &c. for I blush to answer that Objection; since the Occasion of its being urged by some Men of great Reputation as a Seal to the Divine Writings, seems to me to arise from nothing more than that Book's happening to be placed last in our Collection of the Holy Records; nor do I think that Sense would ever have been drawn from it, had it chanced to have been placed in the Middle of the New Testament.

IN fine, to conclude what I have to say on this Head; That the Holy Spirit was designed for our Superior Guide, is easily proved from the Scriptures themselves, which abound with Declarations of its Office; particularly where *Jeremiah* declares that in the *Gospel Day* People should not want to be taught of their Neighbours, for that GOD would place his *Law* in their *Hearts*, &c. where CHRIST promises his Followers that he would send them the *Spirit* of Truth to LEAD and GUIDE them, &c. where St. *Paul* declares that the Grace of GOD HAS appeared unto all Men, TEACHING them, &c. These are plain Texts, that need no Comment to clear them, and contain a Doctrine equally obvious and beneficial; a Doctrine which through the whole *New Testament* appears the Peculiar Benefit of the Gospel Dispensation; however, from various Interested Views, it has been since despised!

MY Friend having spoke a pretty while on the last Article, desired I would open the next, which we thought was, most naturally, that of the MINISTRY.

*I began with observing*, THAT the Necessity of Ministers, or Teachers in the Church, being denied by no Society of Christians that I had ever heard of, what lay upon me was to prove the *Conformity of our Divines to the Models laid down by the first Christian Teachers*, who were Men set apart by the Blessed Author of our Faith, for the only Purpose of instructing his People; and who, by virtue of the Power committed to them, appointed others to assist them in the important Office of the Ministry, and endowed them with Power to transmit the same Gift and Charge to as many as they found



found worthy so great a Trust; who had also a Power of Constituting others, that the Church might never be destitute of Men divinely inspired with Grace and Ability to convince the Unbeliever, fix the Wavering, resolve the Doubtful, stir up the Negligent, instruct the Ignorant, reform the Evil Doer, and comfort those who are of sound Faith. This was evidently the Office of the first Ministers; who being *selected* from their Brethren for that Purpose, always found it a Charge requiring the utmost Exertion of their Abilities, and the entire Resignation of all other Employments and Temporal Pursuits; which were immediately found incompatible with that Attention to the Divine Will, which was necessary to execute the Trust committed to their Care. Thus came the first Distinction of Christian Teachers: And when the Church so miraculously increased, as to require a large Augmentation of spiritual Guides, it was found expedient, for the Benefit of every Member thereof, that the most eminently enlightened of them should each take upon him the Care and Inspection of a certain Number of his Brethren in the Ministry, who were to be under his Direction in whatever he judged necessary to the Advancement of the Christian Cause; and also to have a strict Eye that no Pretender to the Divine Function of the Ministry, perverted the Weak and Unwary. These Superior Servants of the Church were the Predecessors of the present Bishops, and of every true Christian Bishop to our Time; who had all along the Power of Ordaining and Appointing such Persons to the Holy Office as they found properly qualified for it; and on whom they had the Power to bestow a Portion of that Ministerial Gift which was derived to them from the Apostles, for that End. This being the primitive

tive and constant Method of the Church, no Person, without such Appointment from a Bishop, can be a Gospel Minister, or any other than a vain Pretender to that Name, which must always carry with it a Degree of that Holy Unction which first distinguished the Priest from the People; and which can only be had from the Hands of such as have received it in a regular Descent from those who were first favoured with it.

*To this my Friend answered:* THE Office and Duty of the Ministry I allow to be what you defined it; but that Persons were at first *set apart* solely for the Discharge of it, and *secreted from all Temporal Concerns on that Account*, is what I cannot apprehend from Scripture, whatever the Usage of the First Ages of the Church might be: it being pretty plain that the great St. Paul, and several other of the Original Ministers, laboured with their Hands, in order to avoid becoming chargeable to their Profelytes, which, while they could, appears their *Duty* from the Words of their Commission: FREELY *you have received*, FREELY *give*, &c. And, if their Doctrine and Labour in the Gospel was to be *given* FREELY, it is a natural Inference that their Bodily Support must come from some other Quarter, either Personal Substance, or, where that was wanting, from their Lawful Business; which looks very little like being *set apart* for Religious Service only. When a Man has nothing but his Hands to supply his Necessities, and the Discharge of his Ministerial Duty prevents his supporting himself, THEN, doubtless, we ought to maintain him; but not when he can maintain himself: For, you cannot but observe that, should he take any other Earthly Reward for Preaching, he would act contrary to the Nature  
of



of his Office, his Gospel Labours being no other, according the Scripture Idea, than an Obedience to the Divine Will, which is supposed to be obeyed for its *own* Sake, and not any *other* View whatever; the Primitive Ministers having declared they found sufficient Reward in a Conscioufness to having faithfully acquitted themselves in the Ministerial Office. As to ----

*Here I interrupted, and desired to know,* WHETHER it was not highly improbable that a Man whose Head is involved in the many Cares and Perplexities which attend providing for a Family, can be as capable of the Ministry, as one who, having his Temporal Wants supplied without his Care, has nothing to prevent his whole Mind being employed in the careful and religious Execution of his Divine Calling? And whether the many indifferent Discourses delivered by *Tradesmen* in the *Quakers* Meetings, are not Instances of the Necessity there is of freeing Men's Minds from worldly Concerns when they undertake the Ministry?

*He replied:* HAD the Scheme of Christianity been first made up of *Scholastick Terms* and Distinctions, *Scholars* would then have been the only proper Expounders of its Doctrines, and Mechanics could not have been supposed the proper Explainers of its Tenets: But, to me, it appears to have been far otherwise; Plainness and Simplicity being the distinguishing Characteristicks of the Gospel Dispensation, and of its first and most successful Teachers: And our SAVIOUR took all Opportunities to caution his Followers, by Precept and Example, from paying extraordinary Regard to Learning, particularly the *School Divinity* of the *Jews*, at that time in high Repute; wherefore he chose



chose the most unskilful in Science for his immediate Messengers ; a perpetual Monument of the Insignificance of *Study* and *Rhetorick* to a Gospel Minister.

As to the *Illiterate* among our Teachers being an Example of the Want of Learning to a Christian Minister, I apprehend several of what may rightly enough be called their *worst* Discourses, may have *excellent* Effects on Minds of the same Reach, where an eloquent, studied Sermon, would be scarcely intelligible ; it being hard for a Man of high Reasoning and Language to form a proper Instruction for Judgments of Persons of the lowest Class.

WHAT I have said I think enough to prove our Ministers upon a Bottom more agreeable to the Gospel Model, than those of your Church, who, I am sorry to have Occasion for saying it, bear a very slight Resemblance to the original Promulgators of our Faith ! Where is their Contempt of worldly *Grandeur*, *Titles*, and *Riches* ! their *Poverty* ! their *Meekness* ! their *Humility* ! and their Perseverance in taking Care of the Flock first put under their Direction ! — Nor will it, I believe, be much to the Advantage of your *selected* Guides, to take a short View of the *Progress* of by far the greatest Number of them to the Ministerial Authority. — I ask the first Motive to, and End proposed by, fitting a young Man for the Holy Office. Is it the *Glory of God*, or the Hopes of having him *temporally well provided for* ? the *Instruction of Christians*, or *Views of Advantage* ? And what a poor Evidence in favour of a Spiritual Call is the obliging Men thus destin'd and educated on purpose for the Ministry, to declare, before they can be admitted, that they think themselves called by the *Holy Ghost* to that Office ! When,

D

very

very often, the Person affirming this, well knows that little more than a *Tender Mother's Fondness of a black Gown*, or, perhaps, a *Father or Uncle's possessing the Gift of a Benefice*, was the real Cause of his being clerically instructed: Whence we often see a Man put into a Reverend Black Robe, whose natural Capacity reaches little beyond the Plough; and sometimes a Person professing himself, and received by others, as a Minister of the *meek and long-suffering JESUS*, who has not so far subdued his own unruly Nature, as to bear a trifling Contradiction with that Calm and Serenity which is required from every undistinguished Christian! And, that the usual Methods of Preparation to the Ministry produce not the Temper of Mind which seems to be inseparable from a true Gospel Minister, is obvious from daily Experience: But for Example, let us suppose one of your Spiritual Guides, *set apart* after the Manner of your Church, for the Service of CHRIST, in your Place with me here: You know it is his Duty to reclaim me if in an Error; imagine us so far advanced in the Dispute as to give me an Opportunity of questioning his Authority over me, farther than I thought consistent with Scripture and Reason: Mark the good Man! Does he mildly endeavour to confute my supposed Mistake? or, after pronouncing me an obstinate *Heretick, Infidel, or something worse*, stalk majestically from my Presence, deeming me *incorrigible*, as to every Essential of Christianity?

I HAVE digressed thus far, with Design of shewing you, in the easiest Manner I can, the Inefficacy of the so much extolled Education for the Priesthood: Which instead of rendering young Men conformable to the Scripture Plan of CHRIST'S Ministers, too frequently produces a very contrary Effect,

Effect, by ingrafting in them a supposed Superiority over their Brethren, before they well know themselves, or their Office ; which is apt to beget an assuming *Haughtiness*, and *imperious Method* of Instructing and Disputing, and frequently retards the Progress of very great and well-expressed Truths: Whereas with us, no one being invested with more Authority than another, he who believes it his Duty, strives to instruct his Brethren the best he can ; and, as his Motive to teach is not *selfish*, so an earnest Attention is the least we can pay to his friendly Attempts to improve us, since they must be allowed to be well designed, however short they may fall of the End proposed. Whence, I apprehend, it comes, that a voluntary Regard and Tenderneſs to our Mechanick Teachers is observable in our People, while your deep-studied and ableſt Divines are found in frequent Fewds and Animofities with their Parishioners, about ſome Party Diſpute, or their Right of Maintenance ; while two Sermons a Year, to a People who pay for two a Fortnight, are thought an ample Diſcharge of a Spiritual Engagement.

BUT, to return where you ſtopped me.—As to the Inſtitution of Biſhops, I do not remember finding it mentioned in Scripture: And thoſe Paſſages which are urged in behalf of the Preſent Biſhops of your Church relate to Matters which in our Day make a very inconfiderable Part of the Episcopap Office ; it being hard to trace any other Diſtinction in Scripture than aroſe from Virtue and Piety ; a Biſhop being a Man of more exemplary Holineſs of Life than his Brethren, though of no more Authority over them than was given him by their voluntary Deſires to obey his Directions. This Deference is ſtill due to a Chriſtian Biſhop ; but this Regard to *Merit* only is not  
D 2 thought



thought sufficient by most who bear that venerable Name; who are fonder of the Regular Succession you took so much care to prove; which yet I can not think requires any other Confutation than is conveyed by the Assertion of deriving *Pure* and *Unpolluted* Spiritual Authority and Inspiration from a Church, which the Boasters of this *Derived* Gift renounce as *Erroneous*, and *Unchristian*. I well know, many nice and almost inconceivable Distinctions have been made by those that are fond of this transmitted Authority: But I think it a needless Controversy; since it would be an odd Supposition, to think that God left his Church without Ministers duly qualified for his Service, because the great Perverters of his Doctrines rejected such as were too good to conform to their Innovations. Had the *Romish* Church particularly excommunicated every Bishop since the *Reformation*, would they therefore have been the *Worse*; and what Reason then is there to suppose her Approbation could make them the *Better*?

*I answered*, THAT Bishops were mentioned in Scripture, though the Ceremony of their Institution is not particularly described; and the Primitive Christians must have been well satisfied in that Respect, since they carefully supplied and kept up the Succession in the Church, and always esteemed them the *Fountains* whence the Gift of the Ministry proceeded to all ordained or appointed by them: And, though the Bishops of *Rome* might, in some Things, be equally liable to Failings with other Men, yet having been properly appointed Themselves, they still had a Power of bestowing the ministerial Gift on Others, as effectually as if they had never committed those Enormities for which they are blamed; it not being possible for them to *injure* the *Divine Spring* of Authority which was conveyed

conveyed through them to others, however they might abuse themselves: The Gift of the *Ministry* being no way inherent in the *Man*, and can be supposed to be no farther concerned in the Actions of the Possessor, than he acts in his ministerial Capacity; *that* being a publick character, widely different from his private Obligations to Society, for which he is accountable as a Christian only, not as a Priest.

BUT, were one even to allow that your Ministry bears some Affinity to the first Gospel Teachers; whence derive you the Authority you give *Women* to appear in the Work of the Ministry? Surely, you will not plead *Scripture* here; it being earnestly prohibited by the Apostle on some of that Sex offering to undertake that Office: “ Let the Women learn in SILENCE with all Subjection: But I suffer not Women to TEACH, nor to usurp Authority over the Man, but to be in SILENCE ;” and after these Texts, the *Apostle* shews, from the Nature of her Creation and Fall, the Unfitness of a Woman’s pretending to direct a Man, whom Nature and Providence have placed over her, to protect her Person, and inform her Understanding. How a *Superiority* can be maintained over a Person that we acknowledge our *Instructor*, I can not conceive; *Teaching* being the greatest Authority that can be assumed, and most exalted Character can be possessed, and therefore always made the Business of Men, under the *Old* as well as the *New Law*.

*My Friend replied:* WHATEVER Stress you may put on these Words of the Apostle, I see no Reason for understanding them as spoke of *publick Preaching*, since in the Words immediately preceding, he was directing the *Dress* of Women to be plain, and in those following he promises  
their

their Preservation in *Child-bearing* ; neither of which bear much Relation to the Office of a *Minister*, and are sufficient Proofs that the *Silence* here meant was a Silence to the Instruction of the Husband at *Home*, where *Subjection* is necessary, to the Preservation of Peace and *Œconomy* ; and that the Apostle did mean no more, is obvious from several other Parts of his Epistles.

*I answered* : SHOULD these Words be really designed as you interpret them ; yet will the *Preaching of Women* remain a flat Contradiction to one of the warmest Declarations this Apostle ever made, and which cannot, with the least Shadow of Reason, be understood in any other Sense than that of an express Prohibition of Womens Preaching or Praying in Publick Assemblies : I mean Part of St. *Paul's* Epistle to the *Corinthians* ; where his Subject being particularly to regulate the Religious Meetings of the Believers, to reform the Abuses that had already crept in among them, and to establish a wholesome Discipline in that Church, he says, immediately after observing that GOD is not the Author of *Confusion*, Let your Women keep SILENCE in the CHURCHES, for it is not permitted unto them to SPEAK ; and, after shewing the Agreement of this Precept with the Law, and referring *Womens Speech* to their Homes, he adds, For it is a SHAME for WOMEN to SPEAK in the CHURCH. Surely you will not offer to reduce this to a Domestick Doctrine !

*He rejoined* : No : But the Speaking here mentioned was proper to be practised at Home, and consequently was not Preaching for the *Edification of the Church*, or with that Design, is evident from the Words you omitted : For this Speaking  
ing



ing was no other than an *impatient asking of Questions*, during the Time set apart for Preaching and Prayer, which the Apostle advised to be asked at their respective Abodes: Let your Women keep Silence in the Churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak:— And if they will LEARN any thing, let them ASK their Husbands at HOME: Which *Learning*, and *Asking*, bear a Meaning widely differing from *Teaching* and *Instructing Others*; which not being here any way intimated, cannot thereby be prohibited.

To this I said: I AGREE with you, that *Preaching* is not here mentioned: But *Speaking in the Church*, at all, is forbid in Women; and it is pretty hard to imagine how they can *Preach* without SPEAKING.

He replied: THOUGH Words are used in *Preaching*, and therefore they who *Preach*, must, in that Sense, be owned to *Speak*; yet *Speaking* in this Place is forbid as an improper and indecent Enquiry after the Solution of Things which arose in Womens Minds while in Assemblies of Worship. This was certainly blameable, and *such Speaking* ought never to be countenanced: But *Preaching*, or *Propheying*, which the best Commentators say are generally synonymous in the *New Testament*, were always by the Apostle considered as the Effect of Authority divinely superior to the *Speaking* of Men or Womens own Accords; he esteemed it a Charge of the most important Nature, and which required the utmost Care in all who were favoured with it, whether *Men* or *Women*, as appears in the Directions he has given to *Women*, as well as *Men*, for performing this Office, when he directs that every Man should *Pray* or *Prophecy*

*Prophecy* with his Head uncovered, and every WOMAN should *Pray* or *Prophecy* with her Head covered. Had it not been frequent for Women to be endowed with those Gifts, this Direction would not have been given, because it could not have been wanted: And this Instance alone would be sufficient to prove that *Women* were approved as *Preachers* at that Time; but there are numerous other Passages that put it beyond all Dispute; especially the Citation which St. *Peter* brings from the Prophet, and repeats to the *Jews* as fulfilled at the time of his Speaking; “ And it shall come  
 “ to pass in the Last Days, (saith God) I will  
 “ pour out my Spirit upon all Flesh, and your  
 “ Sons and your DAUGHTERS shall Prophecy;  
 “ — And on my Servants, and on my HAND-  
 “ MAIDENS I will pour out in those Days of my  
 “ Spirit, and they shall *prophecy*.” Here is the Authority of the *Old* and the *New* Testament, for the Prophefying or Preaching of *Women* under the Gospel Dispensation; which is also corroborated by the Examples occurring in the Writings of the Apostles: *Philip* the Evangelist had four Virgin Daughters who prophesied: St. *Paul* mentions, and recommends to the Faithful, *Women* who had LABOURED with him in the Gospel, were SERVANTS of the Church, and LABOURERS in the Lord: And *Anna*, on the most extraordinary Occasion that ever was, *preached* publicly in the Temple. Under the Law also are Instances of Women being made the Instruments which God chose for making his Will known to the People: And I think it enough to add, that agreeable to what I have here advanced, our constant Experience has been; and, as at the first great Pouring forth of the Holy Ghost on all present, Women were not excepted, neither are the religious and  
 good

good Women of our Time excluded the Liberty of declaring what they believe their Duty to impart to their Brethren, whether by way of Information or Reproof: And when what is preached is found to be beneficial to the Edification of the Church, it would be a strange Objection to its Usefulness, to urge the Difference of Sex! And, lest you should imagine none since the Time of the Apostles vindicated the *Lawfulness of Womens Preaching*, it may not be amiss to observe, That it is no more than *Luther* asserted in the most express Terms; and never met with much Contradiction on that Account; though, under a false Notion of its being a *New Doctrine*, and peculiar to Ourselves, we have thereby incurred the bitterest Reproaches, as if it had not been *new* only, but so very disagreeable to Christianity, as to render its Advocates unworthy the common Civility due to every Member of Society.

*Here I answered:* NOTWITHSTANDING your Unwillingness to have your *Womens Preaching* reckoned a *New Doctrine*, that no one Denomination of Christians, except your own, allow them that Liberty, is certain, beyond Contradiction; though I own you have offered more in its Defence than I expected; but, however Lawful it be for them, or Men, to preach in the Publick Assemblies of Christians, what can you say in Vindication of an Assembly met for *Prayer* and *Preaching*, and departing without either the one or the other, or hearing so much as a Word uttered? The Design of *Preaching*, is to *instruct*; and the Intention of *Publick Prayer*, openly to *praise* our CREATOR; but I do not see either of these Ends can be answered by a profound *Silence*; nay, if SILENCE is sufficient for these Purposes, and they

E

can



can be obtained without Outward Sermons and Prayers; where is the Necessity of meeting in a Publick Manner at all? Since SILENCE in my Closet, is the same thing with SILENCE any where else, and is capable of receiving no additional Benefit from Company, though it may thereby be diverted from the little Advantage that sometimes attends a serious Meditation on Religious Subjects when alone.

It is so common, *said he*, to despise these Meetings of *Silence*, as the Result of mere Stupidity and Folly, that I do not at all wonder to hear you express yourself on this Head with an Air of Surprize: And yet this *silent Waiting* is agreeable to the Practice of the People of GOD in all Ages; nothing being more frequently mentioned and recommended than a WAITING *on the LORD*, in the *Old Testament*. *David* very strongly enforces this *Waiting*: “WAIT on the LORD; be of good Courage, and he shall strengthen thine Heart:” “WAIT, I say, on the LORD:” And the Prophet *Isaiab*, with the like Concern, declares, that those who WAIT upon the LORD shall renew their Strength, &c. And by our SAVIOUR and his Apostles the WAITING upon GOD is so often commanded, as to render my naming any of the particular Texts, unnecessary; and that this *waiting* was a *silent* Attendance on the Divine Author of our Being, and a quiet and patient LISTENING to the Voice of Instruction which he promis’d to his Followers, can hardly be denied; for he says, that wherever two or three are gathered together in his Name, there he will be in the midst of them: Now where HE is, certainly HE merits the Attention of those present; and I can place this due Attention in nothing but SILENCE, since a Congregation

gation engaged in Preaching or Prayer, can not be said to be *Waiting*, since those Duties, according to the Examples in Scripture, ought to be the Consequences of the *Silence* I have mentioned; the Nature of the Christian Worship not permitting any Man or Woman to open their Lips, either in Teaching or Thanksgiving, before they find it required of them by that Power to which their Obedience is due: *Then* we hold it fit for them to preach or pray, and not *before*; because we suppose that Sermons studied and contriv'd beforehand, in the best Manner possible, are incapable of Suiting the Conditions of the Casual Hearers; and though they may abound with Learning and sound Doctrine, may yet be without some single Hint or Warning which would reclaim a Profligate Mind there present, or strengthen the Faith of a well-inclin'd Enquirer. This, according to our Idea of Worship, can never be the Case; for, if a Man never takes upon him to instruct without the Authority of Divine Impulse, he will always preach to the Immediate State of his Audience, and his Labours will be certain of some good Effects; or, at least, he will have the Pleasure to know he has done his Duty.

Thus, when a Number of People are met to worship their *Creator*, according to my Conception, they are to be *silent* with their Tongues, seeking after, and listening to CHRIST in their Minds. On him who, during this *Waiting*, finds some Precept, or Admonition presented to his View, as necessary to be delivered to the Congregation, it is incumbent to *preach*, the best he can; preferring the *Import* of what he says, to the *Method* of saying it. If *no Member* of the Assembly is sensible of this Concern, *no one* ought to preach; and, consequently, the People there gathered must

part without hearing a Word spoke, and the Meeting be, as to outward Voices, a SILENT one. But, surely, it must not therefore necessarily be an *Unprofitable* one: The Experience of Divine Aid is no where in Scripture confin'd to Words: *Waiting* upon GOD was always acceptable to him, and yet it was always a silent Work; to be perform'd best whilst the *Flesh is still*; which cannot well be said when the *Tongue is employed*: And the Occasion of many of the Scripture Persuasives to Waiting and Silence seems to have been Mens Propensity to Outward Teaching; who, ever Fondest of that Duty in which Themselves have the greatest Share, were unwilling wholly to resign all Opportunity of dazzling the Eyes of the Unwary with Religious Performances, and submit their many Ornamental acquired Talents to the Direction of the ALMIGHTY, who never delighted in the Wisdom of Man, but chose a sincere Sigh of Contrition before all the Oblations that could be offer'd him under the Law, or the most eloquent Declarations of his Power and Mercy under the Gospel.

IT is said by the Fountain of Authority, that GOD must be worshipped in *Spirit*; and the *silent* Worship is of all the most Spiritual Worship, since nothing but the *Spirit* can bear any Part in it. *True* Worship was always pleasing to God, and can be perform'd by none but his real Servants: This *Spiritual* Worship is the Blessing only of the *Sincere* and *Faithful*, and can be experienc'd by none but his Followers; being much more agreeable to the Worship so often mention'd by the Writers of the New Testament, than that which, as it consists in Forms and Observations that any Man can perform, is practis'd as easily by the Abandoned, as by the Devout; with this bad Effect, that they who have been taught to believe it the Worship  
institi-



instituted by the first Preachers of Christianity, seldom look for any thing beyond these visible Performances, and rest contented in their Compliance with what they find may be fulfilled without much Trouble of Body or Mind: Which can never happen to those who think Worship of a Nature purely spiritual; for as they know Worship to be an incumbent Duty, they will naturally be put on Searching after so essential a Step to Future Happiness; and, as the Worship they press after can only be enjoyed by the Virtuous, and Clean of Heart, they must necessarily desist from iniquitous Courses, before they can experience it: So that a Person of this Principle, be his Intellects ever so weak, can never be deceived; there being nothing short of the Divine Favour made so much as an Object of his Notice; lest it might, by striking his Attention too strongly, retard his Search after what he had first in View, and which alone can yield him a substantial Benefit.

*I replied to this:* THE Advantages you speak of are far from being so certainly attendant on what you call Silent Worship, as you endeavour to make them; and notwithstanding your Attempts to swell the Inconveniences attending the Form of our Worship, they have never been found of so monstrous and dangerous a Nature as some produc'd by your Notion of Silent and Spiritual Service. What Extravagances have been asserted, as the Dictates of Heaven; and how many Indecent Absurdities have been committed, under the wild Pretence of Obeying the ALMIGHTY's Voice within! — But amidst your loud Commendations of the inward Enjoyment of Divine Love, is it not astonishing you should disregard the Ordinance which has by all Christians, from Apostles to these Days, been

been found the most certain Means of Communion with our Maker, I mean the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; nor do you pay more Regard to the Observation of Baptism; though both these are expressly instituted by CHRIST, and committed to his first Preachers, to dispense to his Followers, thereby to declare their Admission into the Church, and Communion with its Blessed Head: These, Sir, are *Positive PRECEPTS*, if there are any in the Bible; and, how you can fancy yourselves Christians, while you live in the open and professed Neglect of them, I have always thought Matter of great Surprise!

*My Friend replied:* As to the Benefits accruing from these, it is needless to dispute; The Question being, *Whether they were commanded or not?* Or, rather, supposing they were commanded, *Whether that Command was only Temporary, or is obligatory on Christians to the End of Time?* If we thought the Observation of them was expected from us, we should, doubtless, observe them; and it is a Belief of their not being required from Christians at this Time, in the Manner your Church, and most other Professions use them, that makes us live in what you call the open Neglect of them.

*To this I made Answer:* As to the first of these, BAPTISM, nothing can be more plainly commanded than the lasting Observation of this Ordinance, in the so often repeated Text, where Christ says, "Go ye therefore, and teach all Nations, *Baptising* them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." And, that the Baptism here enjoined was the same which we use, is evident from the Example of CHRIST himself, who  
was

was baptized with WATER, and the Practice of the Apostles through the whole *New Testament*.

*To this he said:* THE Sentence you have cited does, at first View, carry a Meaning much in your Favour; but, previous to an immediate Answer, it will not be amiss briefly to consider the Nature and Design of the Gospel Revelation; one great Purpose of which was, to put an End to all *Types, Shadows*, and outward Observations whatever, by introducing the Substance which they had all along signified; agreeably to which, CHRIST, through his whole Ministry upon Earth, earnestly corrected his Disciples on the smallest Appearance of an Inclination for something Outward and Ceremonious; and, on several Occasions, shews the Repugnance of *Rites and Sacrifices, Washings; &c.* to his *Spiritual Mission*, which he assured them was designed to turn the Minds of Mankind Inward to their Maker, and to abolish all the Outward Observations and Cleansings, in which they had long so fruitlessly delighted.

CHRIST Himself, I own, was baptised with *Water*, and he was pleased also to undergo the Ceremony of Circumcision; so that his conforming to the One, can be of no greater Weight as a Precept, than his submitting to the Other: And *John the Baptist*, the Minister of *Water Baptism*, declares it to be no more then a *Type*, or *Forerunner* of the Baptism of CHRIST, and consequently must cease when That commenced. “I indeed, *says he*, Baptize  
“ you with Water, unto Repentance; but he that  
“ cometh after me is mightier than I: — He shall  
“ Baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with  
“ Fire.” This Text I think alone sufficiently proves CHRIST’s Baptism to be distinct from the Baptism  
of



of *John*; and, as you will scarcely insist on there being *two* Baptisms enjoined, 'tis certainly most agreeable to the Tenor of the Scriptures, to suppose *Christ's* to be the *One* True Baptism; which we see was not to be with *Water*, as the only Dispenser of Water-Baptism openly proclaimed; and we must suppose him the best Judge of the Nature of a Commission wherewith Heaven had particularly entrusted him.

THIS being premised, it is more than probable, that when our SAVIOUR commissioned the Apostles saying, Go teach all Nations, Baptizing them, &c. he meant his own Baptism of the Holy Ghost; it being directed as a Consequence of, or Act following their being taught; to *Teach* being their Primary Command: And were it not, as I think it is, very plain that the spiritual Baptism was here meant, this Sentence would still bear a Sense not any way favouring the Practice of Baptism in your Church; because you administer it before there is a Possibility of the Receiver's being *taught* the Christian Faith, or of knowing the Use or Importance of the Ordinance whereof he is made a Partaker.

*I answered:* THERE is no Room to doubt but that *Water* Baptism was here meant, since, in Obedience to this Command, the Apostles constantly practised it; and the Words of Christ on another Occasion, put this beyond all Doubt, where he says, very earnestly, "Except a Man be born again, of WATER, and of the *Spirit*, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of GOD;" which supposes the Baptism of *Water* as needful as that of the Spirit, and it is here placed first, as the necessary Step to the other, or the Means by which the other must be obtained.

He

*He replied:* THOUGH *Water* and the *Spirit* are here mentioned with an Air of Distinction, it will not be found sufficient to confirm the Use of Water Baptism, when we consider how often *Water* is used to imply a cleansing from Sin, or the *Washing* of Regeneration, which must be experienced before a Man can be *born of the Spirit*; and there are many Places in Scripture that agree with this Sense of the Word WATER; besides which there is one Reason that obliges us to take it in this View, and that is this: It is said, Unless a Man be born of Water, &c. he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. Now should we understand *Water* here to mean Outward Water Baptism, as practised among most Professions of Christians, we must resign to Perdition the far greatest Part of Mankind, who never *heard* of such an Ordinance, and likewise all those among ourselves, who, from the Opinion of their Parents, their own Judgments, or any other *Accident*, happen to die before they have been Sharers of that Ceremony! A Consequence too shocking to be designed by the blessed Founder of our Religion, and too severe to be believed by any of his Followers; who dare exclude none from tasting that Mercy, which, *without any Claim of extraordinary Merit*, themselves have experienced.

I THINK it is enough to add, that CHRIST himself did not baptize with *Water*; and St. Paul, whose Commission was as extensive as any of the Apostles, and who was as diligent in the full Discharge of his Duty as the most zealous of his Brethren, rejoices that he had baptized but few, and declares that CHRIST sent him not to *baptize*, but to *preach the Gospel*. I could say much more on this Head, but as the Plainness of the few Texts I have mentioned always confirmed me in my Judgment

ment in this Point, I chuse to conclude with remarking, that the *Baptism* enjoined by our SAVIOUR was to follow a *Reformation* and *Amendment of Life*, and was to be the *Seal of Acceptance* into the Divine Felicity of the Saints with Christ: This we must understand of *the Baptised* in several Passages in the *New Testament*; and that this cannot be understood of all such as are Partakers of the *Baptism* for which you contend, is too obvious to need any Proof.

*I answered*: As several Things I have to urge in Defence of the *Communion*, which is next to be considered, would bear as much Weight against some things you have mentioned on this Head, I shall not make any direct Reply to what you last offered; wherefore I desire you will give me your Sentiments relating to the Communion of the LORD'S SUPPER.

I BELIEVE, *said he*, the Communion of the Body and Blood of CHRIST, as mentioned in the Scriptures, to be *necessary to our Salvation*; this *Communion*, or *Lord's Supper*, as many are fond of calling it, I believe to be wholly *Inward* and *Spiritual*, A Partaking of Food proper for the Soul; which our SAVIOUR very aptly signified by *Outward Bread*, without which the *Body* not being able to subsist to the Purposes of Life, he thereby clearly intimated the Impossibility of the *Soul's* subsisting without as constant a Supply of *Divine Nourishment*, as the *Body* required of *Natural Food*; a Metaphor familiar, and easy to be understood by all; and perfectly agreeable to that Figurative Method of Expression, which Christ used to his Followers on the most important Occasions. In short, all I can draw from Scripture concerning the



the Outward Observation of *Breaking Bread*, and *Drinking of the Cup*, is, that it was used only as a Type to signify *the inward* by, that its Nature might be more easily apprehended.

*To this I replied:* THAT the Participation of this Sacrament is of *Inward, Spiritual Benefit*, I believe much in the same Manner as you have expressed it; but then that *Inward Benefit* cannot be experienced without using the *Outward Means* at first appointed for its Conveyance: And the *New Testament* abounds with so many Instances of its Efficacy, and such numerous Examples of its being practised in the Manner now used in our Church, as are sufficient to convince any Man, who is not wilfully blind, of its being designed for our Observation in *that*, and no *other* Way; and that he who, be his Motive what it will, neglects the *Outward Visible* Observation of it, has but slender Reason to imagine himself a *Christian*, according to the Gospel Idea of one. CHRIST, you allow, broke *Material Bread*, and drank of the *Elementary Cup*, at the time of his instituting this Ordinance: And in a most solemn Manner he commands his Disciples to practise the SAME; when being on the Point of leaving them, it is said, He took *Bread*, and gave it them to *eat*; saying, *THIS is my Body*: And, blessing the *Cup*, he gave it them to *drink*, saying, *THIS is my Blood*: *THIS do in Remembrance of me*. That those to whom this was spoke, understood it in a literal Sense, is evident from their Instant Obedience, in going about, *breaking Bread*: And the great Advantages that were to attend the worthy Partakers of this *Bread* and *Wine*, are fully expressed by our SAVIOUR himself: “ I am the Bread of Life: He that *eat-*  
“ *eth* of this *Bread* shall live for ever: Except

“ ye eat *the Flesh* of the Son of Man, and drink  
 “ his *Blood*, ye have no Life in you ;” this *Flesh*  
 and *Blood*, and *Bread*, which were to procure Eter-  
 nal Felicity, were indeed *Spiritually* to be under-  
 stood, but not *separately* from the *Outward* and  
*Visible* Method, by which only they were to be  
 experienced.

NAY, the Practice of this *Outward* Ordinance,  
 among the Apostles and Primitive Believers, is so  
 very clear, that your most zealous Champions have  
 not ventured to deny it, but rather chuse to suppose  
 them moved to it by an over Zeal for outward and  
 visible Performances. Thus we often find them  
 speaking too lightly of this Blessed Communion,  
 and, if they impute to it no bad Effects, are sure  
 to strip it of all good ones, and leave it as a mere  
 Ceremony, *Lifeless*, and not of any *Use*: Where-  
 as both Scripture and Experience prove it the great  
 and Peculiar Benefit of the *New Covenant*: The  
 Incomes of *Divine Love*, and the *Renewal of In-*  
*ward Strength*, being in no other Manner to be so  
 certainly and effectually experienced, as at the Ce-  
 lebration of this *Commanded Duty* ; which, for Six-  
 teen Centuries, the Church was unanimous in the  
 Practice of, and probably would have remained so  
 till this Day, had not, very lately, a few Enthu-  
 siasts attempted to spread some upstart Opinions  
 against it, and endeavoured to overthrow the con-  
 stant Sense of the *Christian Church*, by some new-  
 fangled Notions of a *Disordered Mechanick's* Brain.

To this my Friend made Answer: You seem  
 much to glory in the Practice of the Apostles and  
 First Christians, with Regard to this Ordinance:  
 And, though I am far from having the too fashi-  
 onable Itch to depreciate their Authority, yet, in  
 the Present, or any other Case, *their Example*  
 cannot

cannot be urged as a Precept to *us* ; nor are *we* farther to approve or follow *it*, than *we* think it consistent with the Design of their *Divine Instructor* ; it being obvious from the Scriptures themselves, that the Apostles mistook the Sense of some Passages, which at this Distance of Time we think are very easily understood ; and *differed* in their Opinions as to the Abolition of a *Jewish* Rite, which, I presume, you think expressly abrogated : Yet, without Doubt, they were *holy good Men*, *divinely qualified* for the Essential Parts of their Mission ; Men who were appointed to *teach*, and *did actually teach*, ALL Nations : If then they were wrong in respect to one Ceremony, it cannot be absolutely necessary to suppose them right with regard to all others ; and however displeased you may be with the Writers who attribute the Continuance of this *Outward Observation* to their *Misapprehension* of CHRIST'S Design, or a Bias to *visible Ceremonies*, it will appear to have risen from little other Foundation, on a free and impartial Review of the *Occasion*, *Nature*, and *End* of this supposed Institution.

THE Account of it is given us by *three* Evangelists : *Two* of them tell us that CHRIST took Bread, broke it, and gave it to his Disciples, saying, *This is my Body*, &c. without taking any notice of its being commanded to be so much as once repeated ; and only *One* says he added, *Do this in Remembrance of me*. Now had the Performance of this Breaking of Bread, &c. been of that Weight, which most who practise it would have it thought, how can we suppose that *two* Writers, whose Pens were guided by *Divine Impulse*, would relate it barely as a *Fact*, without the least Intimation of its being *enjoined* on Christians for their perpetual Imitation ; and no Command for its Observation  
be



be mentioned till some time after, by a Writer of Authority no way superior to the former *Two*? Nay, St. *Matthew* is so very particular as to the *Actions* and *Sayings* of our SAVIOUR, that it is greatly surprizing he should omit a Command so important, and relate it only as a mere accidental Matter of Fact: Which, at least, looks *much* in favour of my Neglect of the *Outward* Observation of this Ceremony; were I even to allow that the Communion, as used in your Church, and most other Communities, is the same with what was meant in the Words, DO THIS in Remembrance of me; which I have no Reason for *granting*, as will soon appear.

THE Question then being, whether the *Outward* Imitation of CHRIST's last Supper be a Duty incumbent on *Christians*? I answer, *No*: Because in saying *this is my Body*, he meant no more than to shew to those who were then present, the *Sudden Dissolution* of his Earthly *Body*, by the plain Figure of the *Bread* they were then *breaking* for their common natural Support. Any Sense of these Words but this, will lead us to the Brink of Transubstantiation, an Absurdity not worthy Confutation: For I am unable to conceive a Medium: Either the *Bread* must be *Bread*, and consequently *not Christ's Body*; or it must be *His Body*, and not *Bread*; and to avoid the Wildness of the latter Opinion, I always understood it according to the former; to which I know nothing in Scripture contradictory: For CHRIST's using *Bread* in this Place to signify his *Body*, is no more than he has likewise done by various other outward Objects, in as earnest a Manner: And, should *Outward Bread* be absolutely meant as well as the *Inward*, when it is said, "Unless a Man eat this  
" Bread

“ Bread he cannot inherit the Kingdom,” a Consequence must follow equally terrible with that I mentioned in the Case of Water Baptism, *viz.* ALL *who practise it not, must be excluded Future Happiness*; which, surely, you will not offer to assert was the Meaning of the *Merciful* AUTHOR of our Faith, who suffered for ALL, that ALL *might* be saved. So that the Argument stands much on the same Foot with that of *Baptism*; for, if the *Saving Bread* be the *Inward Bread*, the *Outward* is not the *ONE saving Bread*, and can therefore be no more than a *Signification* of it, and is incapable of bearing any part in the *Power* or *Efficacy* attributed to it, its Use being only to *signify* to the Believers the *Spiritual Bread*, and ceased to be of farther Service when the latter was understood and experienced. And another great Objection to the Use of this Outward Bread is, the bad Effect it is apt to have on weak Minds, by preventing their Enquiry after any *Other* Benefits than the Participation of the Outward Ordinance, to which, in the Method of Administring it, all the Blessings promised on eating the *Heavenly Bread*, seem, to *such* Minds, firmly entailed. Hence it happens, that many who behave with the most profound Reverence at the Celebration of this Communion, and receive it with all possible Marks of Veneration, on leaving the Table return to Practices that prove they have been no *Sharers* in the *Bread* spoke of by CHRIST.

PERHAPS you will answer to this, that Perversions happen to the best Institutions, and are never allow'd to be Arguments against their Fitness and Importance: Generally this Objection holds right; but, in the present Subject, can by no means be admitted; for, where no *Outward* Eating of Bread is held to be a Duty, those who do not seek after,  
and

and possess the inward, must, if they read the *New Testament*, be conscious of their being destitute of that *Bread* without which our SAVIOUR declares no Man can inherit an happy Futurity; and on such a Reflection, we can scarcely suppose any Person so careless of his own Happiness, as not to *desire* the Possession of what is so necessary to his Salvation; and this Desire is often the Beginning of a Resolution and Diligence, much to the Advantage of such Enquirers:—At least, if a Person of *this* Belief *thinks* he has partook of the *Heavenly Bread*, it must be from some *Inward* Experience of *Divine Assistance*; without which he can no way be induced to believe he has possessed it: Whereas, in Communities where the *Outward* Bread is offered as the Bread commanded to be eaten in order for Salvation, it is more than possible, as I just hinted, that many may look no farther: Which Consequence alone I think enough to evince the Danger of the *Outward* Observation, were there more Reason for believing it enjoin'd than ever yet appeared.

THIS is plainly, and without the Help of a *Comment* or *Glossary*, the real *Scripture State* of this Point: The Participation of this *Heavenly Bread* was always to be attended by an *Increase of Spiritual Strength*, and a Renewal of Divine and proper Subsistence for the Soul: This we apprehend your Sacrament of the *Lord's Supper* does not always and certainly produce; and therefore we cannot think it the intended Obedience to CHRIST's Expression of *Eating the Bread of Life*, &c. and for this Reason, which we think fully supported by Scripture, and not for any other, we have no Ceremonial Administration of this *Outward Bread*; supposing it not required from Us: But, to such as think it their Duty, upon mature Consideration of all the  
Places



Places in Scripture concerning it, I never heard any single *Quaker* say it might not be of Benefit; for, to those who rest not short of the Heavenly, this Earthly Bread can be no way *hurtful*, though it be *unnecessary*: Since the Performance of an imagined Duty will afford the same Satisfaction of Mind as the Performance of a commanded one; the *Sincerity* of the *Intention* being the *same* in each Case, and acceptable to *Heaven*, whatever Construction Men may chuse to put upon it.

FROM hence it appears, in a great measure, how little we have merited that *Virulence* and those *Hard Names* with which we have been treated, for not seeing with the same Eyes that others do in Relation to this Communion; whilst *we* have thought very favourably of *their* differing from us! How often, for our Practice on this Article, are we stripped of the *Christian* Name, rank'd among the vilest *Infidels* and *Apostates*, and pronounced unfit for *Society*! Nay, such is the Fondness of Mankind for their own *settled Opinions*, Right or Wrong, that, for many Years, whatever we *preached* or *practised* was presently declared to be wrong, and contrary to Scripture, for no other Cause than *our* Preaching or Practising it. A very flagrant Example of which is, that Contempt of the HOLY SPIRIT which, twenty Years ago, so universally reigned among the Vulgar of the *Established Church*, to the great Scandal of all who encouraged it, and in open Contradiction to the Principles of that Church which they fancied they were thereby serving. And equally unchristian has been the Treatment we have met with on account of *Baptism* and the *Supper*.--*Heat* on any *Religious* Subject is highly to be blamed; but in regard to *these* it is even ridiculous; since what you call my *Non-performance* of them, must necessarily be no more than an *Error*

of Judgment, if it be an *Error*; for you cannot believe me in my *Senses*, even as to my own *Interest*, which too generally prevails, and believe also that I neglect an attainable and *infallible Means of Happiness*. Happiness is what we naturally pursue; and if in a Point of Religion a Man of good *Morals* thinks different from yourself, you must believe him *sincere*; especially where he can have no View of *Interest* from such *Difference*. Should it be occasioned by the *Weakness of his Intellects*, or his *Want of Discernment*, then he ought to meet with *Pity*; and a *compassionate Desire to reclaim his misled Apprehension*, should prevent the *Appearance of Dislike and Resentment*: So that in neither Case he can deserve *Blame*, much less *Ill Usage*. But, on the other hand, when a Man expresses himself with no more than a *modest Concern* for a *Religious Observation*, the Performance whereof is principally invested in his *own Person*, there is, even there, some room to enquire narrowly, whether any *selfish View* influences his declared *Sentiment*. But if on this Occasion he uses *unbecoming Warmth*, and, as often happens, *Ill Language*, and *contemptuous Treatment*, a farther Enquiry will then be necessary into the *Causes* of these; and, possibly, they may be found to be no other than the Result of a *Fondness for Reverence and Esteem*, which are no way so easily attracted, as by performing some religious Duty for others, which they are supposed not qualified to perform, as it is required, in their own Behalf. This Distinction, as it places a Man *above his Brethren*, is very grateful to his *Natural Pride*, and may therefore justly be suspected to bear too great a Share in any Argument for the Continuance of the Office that gains this Regard. From whence I only infer, that a Clergyman is not a fit Person to be consulted on these Occasions,

left



lest the Love of Power and Reverence should bias his Judgment, to which another Man is not so liable, being temporally *disinterested* in the Issue of Disputes of this Kind. Were this properly considered, it is to be questioned whether the seemingly zealous Vindications of several *External* Parts of Worship, would be so favourably received as they generally are.

To conclude this Point, in speaking to which I have been unwarily led into some Digressions; I believe all the *Scripture* says concerning the *Body* and *Blood* of CHRIST, and I endeavour to obey what is there directed. I find it a *Spiritual* Thing, without *Scholastick Names*, or *sub-divided Properties*: I find it there affirmed that *whoever* eats the *Bread* CHRIST speaks of, will LIVE FOR EVER; I find no more than ONE *Bread* mentioned to which this Blessing is joined; and therefore I am convinced that *Outward* Bread cannot be the *Bread* recommended by CHRIST; since I presume you would not venture to affirm that all who partake of *that* are thereby made Inheritors of *Eternal Life*; and the Practice of what you call the Christian Church can be no Direction in this Case, their *Opinions* being no way obligatory upon me, since I am blessed with the *same* Opportunity of knowing the *Divine Will*, which they enjoyed; and therefore am not under any Necessity to regard their *Examples*, farther than I believe such Examples warranted by *Scripture* and *Experience*: The *many Years* that the *Outward Bread* was given as the Ordinance of Christ, being no Argument for its *Fitness*; and, whenever you are disposed to *contemn*, or to entertain a *Slight Opinion* of any Doctrine, for being what you call an UP-START one, let me intreat you to consider what were the JEWISH Methods of Worship in the Time of *Moses*;



what the CHRISTIAN Tenets in the Days of CHRIST; and what the PROTESTANT Doctrines at the *Reformation*. Every *Truth* has been NEW-FANGLED, since you chuse the Phrase, and *Newness* cannot properly be objected to *any thing*, while *every thing* must have a *Beginning*. I speak this on Supposition that the Doctrine I have been endeavouring to vindicate, is of as late a Date as you intimate; but I think it far otherwise, and hope its Agreement with the Scripture Account will prove it to be of the Age at least of 1700 Years; and its being *re-preached* by a MECHANICK, can bear little Weight against a Doctrine whose *Original* Promulgators had few selected DIGNIFIED DIVINES among them, nor stood in any Need of Ceremonies to strike the Senses of their Profelytes, to induce them the more willingly to contribute to their State and Grandeur; they preached without Ostentation, and demanded no Tythes for their Recompence; they —

*Here, my Lord, I interrupted, and said:* I FIND, Sir, you are willing, at any Rate, to bring in the *Maintenance of our Ministers*, which, I should have thought, would more naturally have fell under Consideration before: But, I believe, the ill Success of your Late *Tytbe Bill* has made too deep an Impression on your Mind to be quickly erased: Wherefore, since you seem desirous of it, in Compassion to your Disappointment, I consent that TYTHES, or the Settled Maintenance of our Clergy, be the next Thing discussed. But, as I have hitherto opened each Subject, I have a Right to desire you will please to introduce this.

*My Friend replied:* I HAD not the Case of *Tythes* so immediately in view, as you imagine; but expected

pected your Reply to what I last said: However, though Tythes might more properly have been considered sooner, I know not but we may both think it better to consider them here; for to have entred upon every Point under the Head of the *Ministry*, that would have related to *that* Article as much as Tythes, would far have exceeded the Limits of this Conversation; and as *Tythes* have been lately the Subject of much Discourse from the *Pulpit*, from the *Press*, and in *Private Companies*, it will not be amiss to close this Evening's Dispute with our Sentiments on that Article: — I wish I could oblige you by opening the Subject, but it is not in my Power, since a Negative cannot be proved: I deny that *Tythes* are due to the *Christian Ministry*; it lies upon you to shew *whence* it appears they are.

*I answered:* THIS will be no hard Task, if the Authority of Scripture is regarded on this Head; The Support of the *Priests* was the particular Care of the ALMIGHTY under the Law; and if, by *Divine Appointment*, the *Jewish Priests* received the Tenth Produce of the Land, surely they *deserved* it: And shall the *Christian Ministry* be deemed less worthy, and *deprived* of what They so long, and so peaceably *possessed*? Their Office is certainly as honourable, and their Service as *Great*: Wherefore then should their Reward be *Less*? Is not the Gospel as beneficial to the LAITY as the *Jewish Dispensation*? Why then must it be less so to its MINISTERS only? Are those to whom the particular Care of its Propagation is committed, to be the *only* Sufferers by its Propagation? This were to compliment the *Jews* indeed! to let it appear that they contributed more *largely* and *cheerfully* to their Priests, for the *outward* Services of killing and offering



offering Sacrifices, &c. than we are willing to do to ours, for administering the *Seals of the new spiritual Covenant*, for daily consulting our *Souls Welfare*, and continually having the Instruction of their numerous Flocks upon their Minds: Which requires the utmost Application of *all their Faculties*, in order to preserve them in a steady Practice of Piety and Virtue; and, in a Word, the whole Employment of their Lives.

THE Priests among the *Jews* were qualified for their Office by little more than mere natural Strength; *our Ministers* must not only be Men of good *Natural Capacities*, but likewise Men of *Learning* and a *liberal Education*: And must these *additional Qualifications* be requited with a *Diminution* of their Income?

IT is to little Purpose here to reply, That when the *Jewish Priesthood* ceased to be necessary, the Support of Priests continued no longer due; when we are told, under the *Gospel Covenant*, That those who *Preach the Gospel* ought to *Live* by it: The *Spiritual Labourer* being, at least, as worthy of his *Hire* as a Temporal one, which was plainly the Judgment of the *Primitive Christians*, and of the *Catholick Church* to this Day.

WHILE indeed the Church was molested with Persecution, the Contributions for the Support of the Clergy could not be stipulated; but were discretionary, and, as most on your side of the Question seem fond of phrasing it, *voluntary*; but when the Believers obtained Liberty to propagate their Holy Doctrines without Fear, and the *Roman Subjects* in general became Christians, they gladly grasped that first Opportunity of *settling* the Maintenance of the Ministry, which, they saw, was the only effectual Method of preventing the many Inconveniences which must have attended its continuing



tinuing wholly at the *Will* of all Professors; for with the Increase of Believers, Heretical Pretenders to the Christian Name, and contentious Brethren, also increased; so that, from the *evil Designs* of the One, and the *Envy* of the Other, a worthy *Minister* of the Church might have been left *without Bread*, and thereby have been rendered incapable of employing his Talents, though ever so excellent, to the general Good of the Community; it being possible, without a *Regular Provision*, that he might have been unable to procure a *necessary Support*, while the meanest *Mechanic* was not liable to labour under that Difficulty.

BUT, besides this, a Minister relying thus *solely* on the *Pleasure* of his Hearers for Subsistence, might, very probably, have been induced to restrain the Liberty of Preaching with *unbyassed* Rigor against every Error of Faith or Practice, in *whomsoever* it appeared: Which would greatly have blunted the Edge of the Gospel Tenets, and have retarded the Progress of Christianity, which a declared and *irreconcilable* Enmity to Vice and Impiety, *however* dignified, was ever found most to facilitate; for, when the Preacher depended on the *Will* of his Audience for his Support, *Nature* would too aptly have occasioned a Silence, where Correction was most wanted:—Whereas, when the Minister is *certain* of a *proper Share* of all Necessaries, independent of the *Humour* of those he endeavours to instruct, he is not only freed from any Temptation to *coun-tenance Vice* in those who are best able to contribute towards his Support, but is also eased of that *Care*, (as I hinted the Beginning of this Evening) which must take up some Part in the Thoughts of a Man whose *daily Subsistence* is *always uncertain*, and perhaps very precarious. The Establishment of *Tithes* settled every Danger in this Respect, to the general  
Satis-

Satisfaction of the Church, and universal Advantage of Christians, for many Ages; several *Additional Grants* being made, where the former were found not sufficient for the Purposes designed; but no *Reduction* ever *Desired*, or so much as mentioned: The Demurs against this *Settled Provision* being very modern; and the Complaints of their *Unlawfulness* have principally come from those whose Interest it is not only to decry the *Divine* and *Legal* Right of our Ministry to *Tithes*, but their Claims even to the *Attention* of the People committed to their Charge. — A little more *Moderation*, I had almost said *Modesty*, would well become Men, who by the *mere Lenity* of the *Mildest Government* in the Universe, are *permitted* to profess Principles repugnant to the *Established Faith* of the *Realm*; and I fear, in too many Instances, dangerous to the Welfare of its Members.

HERE my *Friend's* Countenance changed, and his Deportment expressed more Confusion, than I observed in him before: And, after a few Minutes Pause,

*He replied*: I WAS somewhat startled at the *Heat* contained in your last Words; and could not tell readily what to attribute it to; but, upon a short Reflection, I concluded, as you had hitherto kept that moderate Temper for which I have many Years valued you, and spoke with Moderation on Matters which most nearly concerned *yourself*, this sudden Change must arise from a Weakness, I was unwilling to believe you tinged with, a *blind Prepossession* in Favour of your Clergy, and a groundless Supposition that *THEIR Interest* is inseparable from the *Interest* of *Religion*. — But you are far from being singular in this: For I have often been astonished to hear a wise Man dispute  
on



on the Attributes of the ALMIGHTY, and the Means of his own *Salvation*, with Discernment and Candor, and serenely bear Contradiction on these Points; and yet on the Glimmering of an Attack upon, or even a Query of his appointed TEACHER'S *Power* or *Income*, descend immediately to *Clamour* and *Hard Names*, and drop every Quality that before made him amiable in the Eyes of all that heard him! But I will not longer insist on a Topick as foreign to our Subject, as possibly it is disagreeable to you; and will therefore proceed, with all the Moderation I am Master of, to confute what you have alledged in Defence of *Tytbes*, as collected by the *Ministers of our National Church*: And I am of Opinion that a few Words will convince you, or any thinking Man, that, however strong their Title to them is from the *Laws of the Land*, their Claims from *Scripture* have but very slender Foundation.

You begun with observing, That, as the *Jewish* Priesthood received the Tenths of the Products of the Land, for their Service in Religious Offices, the *Christian* Ministers are at least as worthy of it, for the Performance of their Duty under the Gospel Dispensation: But this Inference is not at all necessary, nor indeed just; the Former being due by express Command, and the Latter having no such Authority in their Favour. Besides the *Divine Appointment*, the *Tytbes* of the *Levites* were no more than their *Due* from *Reason* and *Equity*, they being *one Tenth* of the People, and allotted no Share in the Division of the Land with the other nine Tribes:—If, by Virtue of *this Allotment*, the Christian Priests demand a Tenth, it will be incumbent upon them to show, first, that *they have not, without these Tenths, as large a Share of Inheritance as their Lay-Brethren*; and, in the next Place, they

H must



must shew, if they would preserve the least *Shadow of Comparison* between the Tythes under the *Law*, and under the *Gospel*, that they are A FULL TENTH OF THE PEOPLE; that for every *Priest* throughout the Kingdom, there are no more than *Nine* other Persons, which was strictly the Case among the *Jews*, and the Calculation upon which the *Right of Tythes* was first granted. Had the *Levites* been without the *Tythes*, they would have had a *Tenth of the Land*; and, as they had a *Tenth of its Products* without the Fatigue which attended procuring it, in lieu thereof they were obliged to perform all the Offices belonging to their Ceremonious Worship; which was filled with so many Observations of one Kind or other, as seem to have afforded the *Levitical* as much Employment, as fell to the Lot of any other Tribe.

It is also necessary here to consider, that the Tribe of *Levi* was selected only for the Performance of *Typical* and *Outward* Observations, for which they received an *Outward* Reward: but, as these *Ceremonies* were to cease at the Completion of the *Things typified*, the *Reward* was surely no longer due; for, what is more absurd, than to assert that, after the *Business* in which Men are employ'd is at an End, yet still their Pay continues never the less due! — If the *Labourer* has hitherto been worthy of his *Hire*, when he no longer labours, wherefore must we longer hire?

It is next to be considered, Upon what Passages in the *new* Testament your Ministry claim *Tythes* from *Christians*: And, though the Clergy very frequently urge the Authority of the *Gospel* in support of their Demand for a *Tenth* Part of the Product of their several Parishes, yet upon the Repetition of the very Texts used by them on this Occasion, it will appear to every Person disinterested in

in the Dispute, that Nothing more was ever meant or authorised to a Gospel Minister, by CHRIST, or the *Apostles*, than his Receiving a Bodily Support from the Believers at such times as the Discharge of his Duty in the Ministry deprived him of any other Subsistence. Thus our SAVIOUR, on commissioning the Apostles, says, as I before observed, “FREELY you have *received*, FREELY *give*: Provide neither *Gold*, *Silver*, nor *Brass*, in your Purses—for the Workman is worthy of his MEAT.” This, surely, could never be understood to imply either a Coach or an Equipage, which yet we see often upheld by Incomes for *Spiritual* Labour!—Agreeable to this Instruction given the Gospel Preachers, is the Rejoicing of *St. Paul* on his having preached the Gospel of God FREELY. And the New Testament abounds with so many Cautions against making *Worldly Profit* of the *Spiritual Gift* of the Ministry, as prove, I should think, beyond any Doubt, that not only a *full Tenth* of our Productions is contrary to the Gospel Provision for its Ministers; but that any *settled Maintenance at all* is as far from an Obedience to the Preaching of CHRIST and his *Disciples*, as would be a Heave Offering, or a sacrificed Heifer; both which were instituted and abrogated at the same Time with *Tythes*, and must be of equal Force till a Command for the Continuance of the Latter appears, subsequent to their general Period of Termination.

THE *Legal* Establishment of *Tythes* is of far the greatest Weight, and to attempt proving they are not due on this Account, would be little better than a mad Undertaking; for it argues great Weakness to endeavour to prove that *Unlawful*, which the *Laws of our Country* enjoin, as has been lamely attempted by Persons pretending to have our Interest much at Heart, though the only Ef-



fect these Men have had, or could expect to have, has been to expose themselves to Ridicule, and to injure the Cause they seemed to defend, by making it appear in a Light much inferior to the *true one*; and despised by all thinking Men that bear the *Quakers Name*.\* It being certain, that the *best Method* of vindicating Tythes, in these Realms, would be to renounce any other Claim thereto than what has been GIVEN by the LEGISLATURE: For I hope I have made it evident that they draw very little Authority either from the Precepts of the *Old Testament*, or Examples in the *New*: And as the *Temporal Power* of our Constitution invests the Present Possessors of Tythes with sufficient Power to levy them at all Events, in Defiance of the warmest Gainfayers, it seems altogether needless to insist on any other Authority than that by which alone they are levied: For, tho' some of the modern Partakers of *Tythes* have had Modesty enough to affirm they are of a *Sanction superior to our Legislature, and independent of its Influence*, yet upon a short Enquiry into the Institution, Progress, and Increase of *Tythes* among Christians, it will be found that even the Authority they derive from Law, was originally an Authority given for *other Purposes* than those to which *Tythes* are now applied; or, at best, it will be found to have sprung from *involuntary Concessions*, and *constrained Grants*, from Princes whose *Distresses* and *Interests* obliged them

\* HERE, I apprehend, my Friend alluded to the unaccountable Four Hundred a Year Author of the *Replication to the Country Parson's Plea*, &c. who, having the Assurance to assert he was offered 400 *l. per Ann.* in Church Preferments, without giving any Proof of so improbable a Fact, is kind enough to convince us that our Church is little worse for his Refusal, by his *low, random, and mysterious Method* of vindicating the Community, of which, *at present*, he is so desirous of being thought a Member.



them to contribute to the Emolument of the *Church*, though at the Expence of their *own Revenue* and their *People's Wealth*.

THE Gentlemen who speak most earnestly in defence of Tythes know, without Doubt, that above Twelve Hundred Years passed after the first Preaching of *Christianity*, before ever the *Pope of Rome* made them Independent of the *Giver's Pleasure*; which probably became then the more necessary, as the Purity of the *Christian Teachers* was by that time much eclipsed, and, consequently, the Inclination of supporting them grew proportionably cool: Before this Time, though they were collected by the *Priests*, they were always gathered in the Name of the *poor Brethren*; to whom the *Priests* were supposed to *distribute them*: When once these *Gifts* were transferred from the *indigent Christians* to the *Ecclesiasticks*, it was not long before they *themselves* shone forth in that *Pomp and Splendor*, which they had so zealously condemned as unwarrantable in *others*, and some of them openly lived in such Voluptuousness, as seemed nearer the Idea of a *Sensual Pagan Emperor*, than that of an *humble Christian Priest*.

BEING arrived thus far, their *Courage* increased with their *Riches* and *Authority*, and Princes were soon brought to a *Necessity* of making such Laws in their Behalf, as they thought fit to *demand*; or throw themselves into the imminent Danger of *losing* their *Crowns* by the *Publick Anathemas* and *Private Intrigues* of the Clergy. Hence, in this Land, the Grants of Tythes before the Conquest were declared to be designed to *avert some impending Judgment*, which the *Priests* found Means to make the *Prince*, and sometimes the *People* also, apprehend: For, whenever they had an *Advantage* in view, no Method was so certain to procure it, as  
to

to make the bestowing it an *Obedience to the Divine Will*: A Feint practised with general Success by Priests of all Denominations. These Artifices were most frequent soon after the Conversion of this Island: And yet *then* the Grants obtained for *Tythes* appropriated only *one* Part of them to the Priest, and the *other two* to repair the Churches, &c. And after the Conquest, though they left the *Poor* out of their Grant, it was not much otherwise; for we find King *Stephen*, after having been harrassed almost out of his *Life* and *Kingdom* by the Clergy of his *Realm*, granting them *Tythes*, to appease their otherwise implacable Fury; but, because it was not *even then* thought expedient to own for what *Causes* they were granted, for want of any better Reason to assign, they are said to be bestowed to procure the SALVATION of HIMSELF and ALL HIS ANCESTORS. In like manner, his Successors, for many Years, constantly healed their Breaches with the *Court of Rome*, or bribed the Resentment of their *own Ecclesiasticks*, by new Concessions: And what, but a Fear of incurring their *Clerical Scourge*, was the Motive of granting the Extraordinary Act in their Favour in the Reign of King *Henry VIII.* which is the most effectual for their Recovery to this Day? And for what Cause, but to avoid the *Clamour of the Clergy*, on the Loss of many of their Possessions, was this Act strengthened and enlarged by the Succeeding Monarch, and the Decision of all Disputes relating thereto vested in the *Spiritual Court*? These Acts are indisputable *Laws of the Land*, and as such, though many of my Brethren will not, I readily *obey* them: The *Preamble* of an Act of Parliament, I imagine myself at Liberty to, *approve* or *dislike*, provided I obey the *Enacting Clauses*; and, though these Statutes ground the Right of *Tythes* as being due to

GOD



GOD and Holy Church, I may pay as little Regard as I please to their *Divine Authority*, provided I conform to their *Temporal Demands*. To deny the latter is certainly blameable ; since, according to our best of Constitutions, our Representatives are supposed to be entrusted with our *Consents* relating to whatever affects the Publick Welfare: And were every Man, when a Law happens to disagree with his *Sentiment*, or *Interest*, to refuse his Compliance, the best of Laws would be attended with the utmost Confusion ; or, more properly, there could be no Laws at all, since none could be duly and *peaceably executed*. This Consideration makes me very chearfully conform to what many well-designing Men among us suffer much for, rather than comply with : I never had other than a *Legal Demand* made of *Tythes* ; and a *Legal Demand* I obey as a *Subject*, not as a *Christian* ; it being always my Judgment that by paying *them* I did no more than my Duty as a *Member of Society*.

HERE my Friend ended ; and there was something so candid in his Conclusion, that it prevented my replying to what he had urged against the *Divine Authority* of *Tythes* ; especially, as I had not much to offer on that Head more than he had answered as he went on: But I observed to him, that the Subject of what he had urged was not the Occasion of the *Noise which he mentioned, lately made about Tythes* ; the *Quakers* not offering in a Publick Manner one Reason against them, only praying more Indulgence for their *head-strong Brethren* in regard to the Payment of them.

To this he replied: I CONFESS what I have said does not immediately affect the late Dispute about *Tythes* ; but I judged it more material to settle the  
Right



*Right of Tythes* in general, than to argue against any Particular Method of levying them. — I have shewn, or at least have endeavoured to shew, that ALL the Right the Clergy have to demand them is derived from the *Laws of our Country*, independently either of the *Mosaick* or *Christian* Dispensations: And, in this View, should the *Quakers* petition even against *Tythes* themselves, I do not see they would thereby commit a Breach of their Duty as *Subjects*, or *Protestants*; but still less blameable are they for their last Application to Parliament; wherein all they prayed was, that such among them as would not readily conform to the Payment of *Tythes*, and *must* therefore be *compelled*, *might* be *compelled* in a Manner *less expensive*, but *not less effectual* to the Recovery of the Clergy's Demands, than those at present commonly chosen on these Occasions; and it is not easy to conceive how a *Minister of the Gospel* can desire to have it in his Power to be more troublesome to another than even the Security of his own supposed *Property* requires; or Why a Clergyman should prefer a *hard* and *oppressive* Course of Law to an easy and *less injurious* one. — However such Men may reconcile these Proceedings to their *Consciences*, I defy the subtlest amongst them to reconcile them to the *Meekness*, *Charity*, and *Brotherly Love* required of every *Common Christian*, and no where, that I remember, dispensed with in their *Spiritual Guides*. — Should the *Quakers* desired Redress be without Foundation, they cannot even *then* be blamed; since they, in common with other Subjects, have a Liberty to complain of whatever they *think a Grievance*; and if it does not *appear* such to those who are the *proper Judges*, their peaceable continuing to bear it, is the best Evidence they can give the Government of the *Honesty* of their Designs,

Designs, and that their Application proceeded from no other Motive than the Desire of Relief, in a Case where, they humbly apprehend, *Scripture* and *Reason* would grant it.

I WAS going to reply, but Word being brought that Supper was on the Table, we closed our Discourse for the Present, referring the farther Pursuit of the Subject to another Opportunity.

THE next time I met my *Kinsman*, he returned Thanks for my Endeavours to reclaim him; but begged I would not blame him for continuing in the Principles he had embraced: “ For, *said he*, “ though I am much obliged for your Attempts “ to vindicate the Tenets of the Church you are “ a Member of, and, according to the best of my “ Discernment, think you made use of the most “ effectual Arguments in their Defence, yet they “ appear to me not sufficient to support the Authority of the Principles they were brought to vindicate : There being such an Agreement in the “ Opinions and Practices of the *Quakers* with the “ Account of the *First Christians*, as I cannot find “ in any other Denomination among us ; which “ alone was the Motive of my *joining them*, and “ must be the Cause of my continuing among them, “ till I find a People nearer the Scripture Plan of “ Christianity; when it would be as much my “ Duty to leave the *Quakers*, as it was lately to become one of their Profession.”

I                          though

THUS, *My Lord*, I have laid before you an impartial Account of this Conversation; in which I have had a greater Regard to *Truth* than *Method*. I am under much Concern that it had not its desired Effect, and my Kinsman's Continuance among the *Quakers* gives me the more Uneasiness, because,



though at first I thought he might have been recovered by a little Reflection and Reasoning, I now know not what Step to take, there being no Hopes of his ever being reclaimed by reading the Books now extant against them; they being too generally destitute of that *Charity* which he has always declared to be the certain Attendant of Truth, and the inseparable Mark of a Christian Doctrine.

ONE thing I observed in all *our Writers* against the *Quakers*, was, a Haughtiness of Language, and an imperious Manner of using them; which is apt to beget a Dislike in the Reader to a very material Truth when so asserted; and, as all *these Gentlemen* have happened to be Clergymen, it seems but indifferently to become the Ministers of that *meek and Patient Jesus* whose Church they undertake to defend. This Manner of treating any *Body of Dissenters* has been a great Reason of the many Separations from our Church that still are kept up; and *your Lordship* has shewn, on all Occasions, so much *Temper and Moderation*, that there is no doubting your Dislike of every thing writ with the least Appearance of *Hatred or Contempt*: The abounding of which in all who have yet wrote against them, is one Instance of the Need we are in of a Confutation of *Quakerism* free from that Heat and Impatience which has made the Performances of all those who have hitherto attempted such a Work, appear rather as *Invectives* against that *People*, than as *Tracts* wrote to refute false *Principles*, and for the Information of *misled, or mistaken* Christians.

ANOTHER Fault of most, if not all our Writers against the *Quakers*, is, their repeating, one from another, a Series of RIDICULOUS ACTIONS of Persons professing themselves of that Persuasion. This, *my Lord*, though it be the most copious and favourite Argument of any, is, surely, the worst Argument



gument can be used ; it being a hard matter for any Community to vindicate the unaccountable Frenzies with which some of its Members have been possessed ; and it would be as sound Reasoning for a Person to assert, that, because a *Member of the Church of England committed Murder*, the *Church of England allows and countenances Murder* ; as to say that, because *Nayler blasphemed*, *Eccles ran naked into a Church during Divine Service*, and a *Servant Maid of Bread-Street Burnt the Bible*, THEREFORE the Quakers hold with *Blasphemy, Indecency, and Contempt of the Scriptures!*—And yet Inferences of this Kind are frequent, even in our best Authors that have wrote on *Quakerism*, though I am unable to know what they proposed by them ; since the *Quaker-Writers* never laid hold of that *Crutch* to support their Principles, nor seem ever to have had Recourse to any thing *Personal*, but when they were first *personally attacked*.

THIS has given the Advocates for the *Quakers* great Advantage over the *Writers against* them, and many have concluded that nothing but *want of Argument* could plunge Men into so much *low Scandal*, where *Reasoning* only could hope for Success.

HENCE, my Lord, I cannot help thinking, that could we once boast of a *Detection of the Errors of the QUAKERS* written with a *Calmness* becoming the Subject, and without any *other Design* or Tendency than that of *Reclaiming the Mised*, the *Increase* of these People, so much gloried in of late, must speedily cease.

THIS, according to the best of my Judgment and Observation, is the Present State of this Nation with respect to the *Quakers* ; and whether it be just and agreeable to Experience, Your Lordship is of any the best Judge ; since your Vigilance for the

the Good of that Church which has so eminently distinguished you, has enabled your Lordship to arrive at the Knowledge of the State of our Religious Relations and Interests with more Certainty than has hitherto been attainable by any who have undertook our Church's Defence against the various Attacks of its Enemies. Should I be so fortunate as to have your Lordship think my Apprehensions of Danger from the *Quakers* reasonable, and a *Rational, Persuasive, and Charitable* REFUTATION of their erroneous Opinions, the only proper *Preservative* against them: I shall then have the Pleasure in common with all my Countrymen, of being enabled, by such a Work, to *answer their Objections*, without *despising the People* themselves.

I AM afraid I have detained your Lordship too long; which is the less excusable at a Season when all hearty Friends to the Established Church fix their Eyes upon your Lordship as the *great Advocate* of their Cause, and the Person on whose Prudence and Conduct they continue to rely: And I make no Doubt but your Lordship's usual Zeal for the Good of our *Established Church* will be crowned with the Success it deserves; to the Joy of all her faithful Members, and the most sensible Pleasure of one whose greatest Ambition is to prove himself

5 0129  
Your LORDSHIP'S

LONDON,  
3. 1737.

Most Dutiful SON.

